



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

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GOVERNOR KAINE ANNOUNCES FEDERAL DISASTER DESIGNATIONS FOR 78 VIRGINIA COUNTIES, 34 CITIES ~ 15 Counties Previously Received Disaster Designations ~

RICHMOND - Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced today that the Acting U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has designated 78 additional Virginia counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing. Previously, 15 counties had been declared primary natural disaster areas.

With these additional designations, all Virginia counties are now covered with the exception of Arlington and York counties. Arlington and York were not approved as primary natural disaster areas because they were not found to have sustained qualifying crop losses due to the natural disaster, but which have received contiguous disaster status. The independent cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Poquoson have also received contiguous disaster status; all other independent cities in Virginia have already been designated or named by the Secretary of Agriculture for this same disaster.

These disaster designations make farmers eligible for low-interest loans and any supplemental relief that may be provided by Congress.

“Because of the statewide disaster designation, farmers with qualifying crop losses across Virginia are now eligible to apply for low-interest loans that can help provide critical assistance,” said Governor Kaine.

Because agriculture in the entire state has been impacted by the drought, Governor Kaine and the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Todd P. Haymore, had requested a statewide primary natural disaster designation. Governor Kaine also sent letters to Virginia’s Congressional Delegation encouraging them to support special legislation for direct financial assistance to farmers. Such assistance could offset drought losses that could have long-term negative economic consequences for Virginia’s farm families.

Disaster declarations make farm operators in both primary and contiguous areas eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provided they meet certain eligibility requirements. FSA will consider each application on its own merits by taking into account the extent of the losses, security available, and repayment ability. Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with additional information.

For previously issued disaster designations and additional drought-related information, visit the VDACS drought webpage at <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/news/drought.shtml>.